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Health Services and Mental Health Administration
Washington D.C. 20201

VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

Health Interview Survey Data

FROM THE

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

Cigarette Smoking Status—June 1966, August 1967, and August 1968

For the past 3 years the National Center for Health Statistics has contracted with the U.S. Bureau of the Census to include a supplement to the Current Population Survey on smoking habits in the United States. The first data were collected as a supplement to the Current Population Survey of June 1966, the second supplement was added to the questionnaire in August 1967, and the third in August 1968. Similar data were collected during the period July 1964–July 1966 as a part of the ongoing Health Interview Survey. (See "Current Estimates from the Health Interview Survey, United States, 1967," *Vital and Health Statistics*, PHS Pub. No. 1000, Series 10, No. 52, and "Changes in Cigarette Smoking Between 1955 and 1966," Series 10, No. 59, which is now in publication.) Estimates of the cigarette smoking status of the U.S. civilian, noninstitutional population 17 years of age and older are based on the data collected in June 1966, August 1967, and August 1968.

There were an estimated 2½ million more persons who had formerly smoked cigarettes in August 1968 than in June 1966. The proportion of former smokers in the population increased from 11.5 percent in 1966 to 13.2 in 1968, an overall increase of 15 percent. While there is a larger proportion of

former smokers among males than among females, the proportion of female former cigarette smokers is increasing at a faster rate than that of males. From June 1966 to August 1968 the proportion of male former smokers increased by 12 percent and the proportion of female former smokers increased by 22 percent. In addition the increase occurred primarily among males in the age group 17–24 years while it was spread throughout all age categories for females.

In 1966 an estimated 39.6 percent of the population aged 17 years and over smoked cigarettes; in 1968 the comparable percentage was 37.7, a drop of 5 percent. This decline in the proportion of present cigarette smokers is larger among males than among females. For both sexes the decrease in the proportion of present smokers over the 2-year period was greatest at the younger age levels, with no decline among males over 64 years of age and an actual increase in the proportion of females in the oldest age category who smoked cigarettes. The decline in the estimated number of cigarette smokers shown in these data is also reflected in the drop in per capita consumption figures published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in *Tobacco Situation*, TS-129, September 1969, an Economic Research Service publication.

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Table 1. Number and percent distribution of persons 17 years of age and over in population, by cigarette smoking status according to sex and age: United States, Current Population Survey, June 1966

Sex and age	Number of persons in thousands	Cigarette smoking status				
		Total population	Present smoker	Former smoker	Never smoked	Unknown if ever smoked
BOTH SEXES						
Total, 17 years and over-----	124,500	100.0	39.6	11.5	46.4	2.5
17-24 years-----	22,711	100.0	37.6	4.4	55.7	2.3
25-44 years-----	45,132	100.0	49.6	11.7	36.7	2.0
45-64 years-----	38,960	100.0	40.2	14.5	42.4	3.0
65 years and over-----	17,697	100.0	15.3	13.8	68.0	2.9
MALE						
Total, 17 years and over-----	58,469	100.0	48.6	17.2	31.4	2.8
17-24 years-----	10,529	100.0	44.4	4.6	48.3	2.7
25-44 years-----	21,536	100.0	57.9	16.0	23.9	2.2
45-64 years-----	18,688	100.0	50.1	21.9	24.8	3.3
65 years and over-----	7,717	100.0	24.6	26.7	45.4	3.2
FEMALE						
Total, 17 years and over-----	66,031	100.0	31.6	6.5	59.7	2.2
17-24 years-----	12,182	100.0	31.6	4.2	62.2	2.0
25-44 years-----	23,596	100.0	42.1	7.9	48.3	1.7
45-64 years-----	20,272	100.0	31.1	7.6	58.7	2.6
65 years and over-----	9,980	100.0	8.1	3.8	85.5	2.6

NOTE: For official population estimates for more general use, see U.S. Bureau of the Census reports on the civilian population of the United States in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, P-25, and P-60.

Table 2. Number and percent distribution of persons 17 years of age and over in population, by cigarette smoking status according to sex and age: United States, Current Population Survey, August 1967

Sex and age	Number of persons in thousands	Cigarette smoking status				
		Total population	Present smoker	Former smoker	Never smoked	Unknown if ever smoked
BOTH SEXES						
Total, 17 years and over-----	126,579	100.0	39.1	12.3	46.2	2.5
17-24 years-----	23,377	100.0	37.0	4.9	55.8	2.4
25-44 years-----	45,488	100.0	48.5	12.6	36.9	2.0
45-64 years-----	39,649	100.0	40.0	15.2	42.0	2.8
65 years and over-----	18,064	100.0	16.0	14.4	66.5	3.1
MALE						
Total, 17 years and over-----	59,248	100.0	47.8	18.2	31.4	2.6
17-24 years-----	10,739	100.0	43.8	5.2	48.3	2.7
25-44 years-----	21,733	100.0	56.3	16.9	24.9	2.0
45-64 years-----	18,956	100.0	49.6	23.1	24.4	2.9
65 years and over-----	7,821	100.0	25.5	27.8	43.4	3.3
FEMALE						
Total, 17 years and over-----	67,330	100.0	31.4	7.0	59.3	2.3
17-24 years-----	12,638	100.0	31.2	4.7	62.1	2.0
25-44 years-----	23,755	100.0	41.3	8.8	48.0	1.9
45-64 years-----	20,694	100.0	31.3	7.9	58.1	2.7
65 years and over-----	10,243	100.0	8.7	4.2	84.2	2.9

NOTE: For official population estimates for more general use, see U.S. Bureau of the Census reports on the civilian population of the United States in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, P-25, and P-60.

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Table 3. Number and percent distribution of persons 17 years of age and over in population, by cigarette smoking status according to sex and age: United States, Current Population Survey, August 1968

Sex and age	Number of persons in thousands	Cigarette smoking status				
		Total population	Present smoker	Former smoker	Never smoked	Unknown if ever smoked
BOTH SEXES						
Total, 17 years and over-----	128,556	100.0	37.7	13.2	46.9	2.3
17-24 years-----	23,962	100.0	34.8	5.8	57.3	2.1
25-44 years-----	45,985	100.0	47.1	13.6	37.5	1.7
45-64 years-----	40,227	100.0	38.5	16.1	42.7	2.7
65 years and over-----	18,381	100.0	15.9	15.2	65.9	2.9
MALE						
Total, 17 years and over-----	60,073	100.0	45.9	19.2	32.6	2.3
17-24 years-----	10,987	100.0	41.3	6.5	50.0	2.2
25-44 years-----	21,987	100.0	54.7	17.8	25.8	1.7
45-64 years-----	19,189	100.0	47.3	24.0	26.0	2.7
65 years and over-----	7,910	100.0	24.5	28.8	43.4	3.3
FEMALE						
Total, 17 years and over-----	68,483	100.0	30.5	7.9	59.4	2.2
17-24 years-----	12,975	100.0	29.4	5.3	63.4	1.9
25-44 years-----	23,998	100.0	40.2	9.8	48.2	1.7
45-64 years-----	21,039	100.0	30.5	8.8	57.9	2.7
65 years and over-----	10,471	100.0	9.5	4.9	82.9	2.7

NOTE: For official population estimates for more general use, see U.S. Bureau of the Census reports on the civilian population of the United States in Current Population Reports, Series P-20, P-25, and P-60.

Technical Notes

The information from the Current Population Survey of the U.S. Bureau of the Census on cigarette smoking habits of the civilian, non-institutional population was collected in household interviews in June 1966, August 1967, and August 1968. A supplement was added to the basic Current Population Survey for each of these months to derive information as to the smoking habits of the population. The information in tables 1, 2, and 3 was obtained from the following questions, which were worded alike in all three supplements:

Has...smoked at least 100 cigarettes during his entire life?

Does...smoke cigarettes now?

The Current Population Survey's sample design in June 1966 was spread over 357 areas comprising 701 counties and independent cities, with coverage in each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia. Approximately 35,000 households, which contained about 75,000 persons 17 years of age or over, were designated for inclusion in the survey. Interviews were not obtained from about 1,500 of these households because the occupants either were not found at home after repeated calls or were unavailable for some other reason. Noninterview adjustment factors are employed to take into account these households. During August 1967 the Current Population Survey sample consisted of about 52,500 households with a noninterview rate of about 4.5 percent. The August 1968 sample contained about 50,000 households with a noninterview rate of about 4.6 percent.

Since the estimates based on these data are obtained from a sample, they are subject to sampling variability and to errors of response and reporting. The standard error is primarily a measure of sampling variability, that is, the variations that occur by chance because a sample rather than the entire population is surveyed. Approximations of the standard errors of the estimates have been computed. Standard error tables for the 3 years have been prepared; the order of magnitude of these errors for percentages shown in this report is summarized below:

	Percentage		
June 1966 base	10	25	50
10,000,000 -----	0.4	0.6	0.6
25,000,000 -----	0.2	0.4	0.4
50,000,000 -----	0.2	0.3	0.3
100,000,000 -----	0.1	0.2	0.3
August 1967 and 1968 base			
10,000,000 -----	0.3	0.5	0.5
25,000,000 -----	0.2	0.3	0.3
50,000,000 -----	0.1	0.2	0.2
100,000,000 -----	0.1	0.2	0.2

The standard error of the difference between two percentages is approximately the square root of the sum of squares of the standard error of each estimate considered separately. For instance, the percentages of present smokers among males in 1966 and 1967 were 48.6 and 47.8, respectively. Linear interpolation from the above table indicates that for populations of 58.5 million and 59.2 million the standard errors of these percentages are about 0.3 in 1966 and 0.2 in 1967. Thus, the standard error of the difference is about 0.36. The observed difference between the two percentages is 0.8. This difference divided by the standard error of the difference between the two percentages ($0.8/0.36$) gives a value of 2.2. This value means that a difference of 0.8 percentage points may occur by chance alone about three times out of 100 observations. Thus, this difference may be considered statistically significant. Smoking information was obtained for persons who were not home at the time of the interview from a household respondent. The type of respondent, i.e., self, respondent or proxy, had little effect on the rates of present smokers

for males but had some effect on the rates of present smokers for females. The degree of the differences for 1968 was similar to those reported for 1966 and 1967 in Series 10, No. 52.

	Percent present smokers	
1968	Male	Female
Self-----	47.3	32.8
Proxy-----	46.4	25.9

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